

## National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

Linda Wesson, Associate Legislative Research Analyst  
(615) 401-7881/ [Linda.Wesson@tn.gov](mailto:Linda.Wesson@tn.gov)

September 2011

### Key Points

- The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certified over 91,000 teachers in the United States from 1994 through 2010, representing about three percent of the nation's teaching force. To apply for national certification, licensed teachers must have at least three years of experience and pay a \$2,500 application fee. The 10-part assessment of subject and teaching knowledge can take from one to three years. Approximately two-thirds of applicants receive National Board certification.
- A 2008 National Research Council (NRC) report found that students taught by board-certified teachers had higher achievement test gains than did those taught by non-board-certified teachers, although the differences were small and varied by state.
- Many states offer teachers financial incentives (salary bonuses and fee supports) to attain certification; teacher participation rates are higher in states that offer such incentives. Tennessee does not provide state-level financial incentives. Tennessee ranks below average nationally and regionally in National Board certification rates; 484 (.06 percent) teachers have been certified since 1994. Some local school districts in Tennessee offer financial incentives; most of Tennessee's National Board certified teachers are in districts that provide such incentives.
- Some local districts and states use board-certified teachers in their strategies for low-performing schools by offering financial incentives to board-certified teachers who work in schools that are hard-to-staff or have a high percentage of disadvantaged students.
- Recent developments include the National Board's new certification program for principals and teacher leaders, currently in the pilot-testing phase, and the board's exploration of using student data from standardized tests as a component of certification.

### What is the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards?

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is an independent, nonprofit organization founded in 1987. The mission of the board is to advance the quality of teaching and learning by developing professional standards for accomplished teaching and certifying teachers who have proven they

meet those standards. The organization was created in the wake of a 1986 report by the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, which called for the creation of a national board to set standards for the profession.<sup>1</sup> The Carnegie Corporation of New York made the initial \$1 million establishing contribution, and the U.S. Congress began annual federal appropriations in 1991.<sup>2</sup>

## How is the board funded and governed?

The National Board is funded by corporate donations,<sup>3</sup> application fees, and federal funds through the U.S. Department of Education. Federal funding has accounted for a decreasing share of the board's funding over the years. As of September 2009, federal funds accounted for 30 percent of the board's total cumulative funding over the years, down from 55 percent in 2001.<sup>4</sup> The National Board's federal funding in fiscal year 2010 was \$10.6 million.

In the final 2010–11 federal appropriations bill, adopted in April 2011, direct federal funding for the National Board and other education programs was replaced with a new competitive grant pool for national not-for-profit organizations that engage in teacher training or professional enhancement activities. This change is expected to result in reduced federal funding levels for National Board programs. Federal funding has been used for National Board application fee subsidies awarded by the states. Despite the funding changes, those subsidy grants are expected to continue for at least one or two more years.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, the National Board is determining how best to restructure the subsidies to continue to assist teacher applicants. Other federal grants related to teacher quality and school improvement may provide additional funding opportunities for the National Board.

The National Board is composed of 27 members, a majority of whom are teachers, in addition to school administrators, representatives of teachers' unions, and education-related professional associations and nonprofits, such as the Tennessee Association of Middle Schools and the Mississippi Commission on Teacher and Administrator Licensure.

## What is the certification process?

National Board certification is a voluntary advanced teaching credential offered to kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, as well as to school counselors and librarians. The certification is offered in most subject areas. Candidates must have a valid state teaching license and have completed three years of teaching. The certificate is valid for 10 years. The application fee is \$2,500, plus a \$65 processing fee. It is different from state licensing, which is a mandatory, entry-level requirement for beginning teachers.

Five core propositions are the foundation for the National Board's standards and the assessments used to evaluate teachers against those standards. The five propositions are:

- Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
- Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
- Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
- Teachers are members of learning communities.

The National Board offers 25 certificate areas in 16 subject areas (such as career and technical education, English as a new language, and physical education, as well as math, science, and social studies) and in combinations of four student age groups. For example, a candidate may seek certification in English language arts for early adolescent students, music for adolescents and young adults, or as a generalist in early childhood. (See Appendix A.) Each of the different certificates has established standards that candidates must meet. These standards address what teachers should know about their students and their subject areas, and how they should establish a good learning environment, apply resources, reflect on their teaching practice, and develop connections outside the classroom.

On many points, the National Board's certification standards closely parallel Tennessee's new standards for evaluating teachers through classroom observations. Although the standards differ for each of the 25 National Board certifications, there are common themes throughout. Those themes frequently correlate with the 19 Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) indicators Tennessee will use for teacher evaluation, most commonly in the following areas:

- Teachers should know their subjects and their students.
- Teachers should create positive learning environments, respectful of cultural diversity.
- Teachers should plan instruction to align with standards and reflect students' needs, interests, and values.

- Teachers should engage students through a variety of activities, materials, and meaningful connections.
- Teachers should provide academic feedback and assessment.

The Department of Education's advisory teams on evaluating teachers in non-tested grades and subjects have looked to the National Board standards in developing some of their recommendations.<sup>6</sup>

The National Board assessment consists of 10 parts. Four parts are portfolio entries prepared by the teachers that demonstrate their teaching practices, including at least two video recordings in their classroom and examples of student work. The other six parts are timed, online response exercises that teachers complete at computer assessment centers to demonstrate their content knowledge and teaching strategies. The assessments are scored by at least 12 active teachers in the same subject area as the candidate, who have been trained by the National Board on the certificate standards.

The certification process is demanding, taking from one to three years to complete, with an estimated 200 to 400 hours of preparation. Nationally, only about 40 percent of candidates complete certification successfully on their first try; eventually, 65 percent of those who attempt certification are successful.<sup>7</sup> Unsuccessful candidates can “bank” their passing scores and retake other portions of the assessment within a specified time period.

Renewal candidates must begin the renewal process during the eighth or ninth year of their initial 10-year certification period and must complete it before their original certification expires. The renewal process requires teachers to compile a three-part “profile of

professional growth,” and the application cost is \$1,150.

The National Board also offers a “Take One” program, allowing teachers to sample the certification process by preparing and submitting one pre-selected video portion of the assessment for evaluation. Teachers and schools can use the program as a professional development opportunity and teachers can apply their Take One score to their full certification if they choose to pursue it.

### How many teachers participate?

National Board certified teachers (NBCTs) comprise approximately three percent of the country's teaching force. From 1994, when the National Board certified its first class of 177 teachers, the number of NBCTs has grown steadily, from 16,000 in 2001 to more than 55,000 in 2006, up to 91,000 today. (See map at <http://secure.nbpts.org/ammap/index.html>.) The South continues to be a leader in board-certified teachers, with more than 57,000 (63 percent) of the nation's 91,000 NBCTs. North Carolina, Florida, and South Carolina lead in total numbers of NBCTs. North Carolina, Washington, and Illinois had the largest number of new teachers certified in the 2009–10 certification cycle. (See Exhibit 1.)

Approximately 4.7 percent of southern teachers were certified as of 2009. Individual states' participation levels varied significantly. Participation was highest in North and South Carolina (15 percent) and lowest in Tennessee (0.6 percent) and Texas (0.2 percent). In 2010, 71 teachers in Tennessee received National Board certification, bringing the state's total to 484. Tennessee's number of board-certified teachers, while still very low, has increased at rates above the national average. Tennessee increased 17 percent over the previous year, compared to 10.5 percent nationally, and

TAP, or the Teacher Advancement Program, was approved by the State Board of Education as the state model for districts to use for teacher evaluations starting in 2011–12. As part of its First to the Top initiative, Tennessee is implementing a new teacher evaluation system that depends on classroom observations of teachers' practice for 50 percent of the evaluation score. The TAP teaching standards are incorporated into 19 indicators that will be used by participating districts to evaluate all their teachers in their classrooms. Districts choosing to use another evaluation instrument must receive State Board of Education approval, which 14 districts have received.

increased 130 percent from 2005 to 2010, compared to 92 percent nationally.

Of Tennessee's 484 teachers who have ever received certification, 26 teachers' certificates have expired and 23 teachers have renewed their certification for another 10 years. Within Tennessee, seven school districts account for 78 percent of the state's active NBCTs: Memphis City leads all the districts with 197 certified teachers (43 percent), followed by Williamson County (47; 10 percent), Metro Nashville (44; 10 percent), Johnson City (25; five percent), Franklin Special (19; four percent), Hamilton County (18; four percent) and Putnam County (10; two percent). (See Exhibit 2.)

### What is the value of certification?

Research on the impact of National Board certified teachers has been ongoing almost as long as teachers have been seeking its certification. Studies by private organizations as well as research projects sponsored by the National Board itself have addressed topics such as certification's impact on teacher leadership and professional development, teaching practice, teacher retention, and student achievement.

In 2004, Congress asked the National Research Council (NRC) to evaluate the impact of the National Board certification program.<sup>8</sup> The council established a 17-member committee in 2005 to carry out the evaluation. The committee reviewed 25 prior research studies that met certain methodological standards, conducted its own analyses, and interviewed numerous researchers and stakeholders. After almost three years of work, the Committee on the Evaluation of the Impact of Teacher Certification by the NBPTS

published its report, *Assessing Accomplished Teaching: Advanced Level Certification Programs*.<sup>9</sup>

### Certification's Impact on Student Achievement

The NRC report found that students taught by board-certified teachers had higher achievement test gains than did those taught by non-board-certified teachers, although the differences were small and varied by state. The NRC committee noted that many past studies of the effects of national board certification on student achievement presented contradictory results, with some studies finding mostly positive impacts<sup>10</sup> and other studies finding mixed results or no effect.<sup>11</sup>

Given the "complex set of somewhat conflicting results," committee members chose to focus on seven existing studies, primarily from North Carolina and Florida. Both of these states have large numbers of board-certified teachers (18,000 in North Carolina and 13,500 in Florida), as well as longitudinal databases

**Exhibit 1: Southern States Participation, National Board Certified Teachers**

	Total NBCT as of December 2010	% Increase from January 2007	Total NBCT as of January 2007	% of State's Teachers Who Are NBCT
Alabama	2,007	83%	1,097	3.8%
Arkansas	1,690	190%	583	3.8%
Florida	13,532	46%	9,238	7.2%
Georgia	2,604	12%	2,325	2.2%
Kentucky	2,156	93%	1,116	4.1%
Louisiana	1,681	63%	1,032	3.1%
Mississippi	3,222	26%	2,555	9.4%
Missouri	670	95%	343	0.9%
North Carolina	17,957	59%	11,325	14.9%
South Carolina	7,784	53%	5,077	15.5%
Tennessee	484	109%	232	0.6%
Texas	627	99%	315	0.2%
Virginia	2180	92%	1137	2.8%
West Virginia	580	100%	290	2.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>57,174</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>36,665</b>	<b>4.7%</b>

Note: Total NBCT (2007, 2010) from NBPTS data on all teachers ever certified.

Source: Percent of State's teachers who are board-certified based on total certified as of the end of 2009, calculated from NBPTS website and teacher workforce totals from 2009-10 National Center for Education Statistics, <http://nces.ed.gov>.

that allow for the study of teachers' effects on student academic achievement.

As a group, these studies show that the students of board-certified teachers performed better than students taught by non-board-certified teachers (the magnitude of the difference is [small,] on the order of 0.02 to 0.08 of a standard deviation). The studies demonstrate that board certification is a signal that teachers with this credential are more effective than other teachers at raising their students' test scores.<sup>12</sup>

The National Research Council committee's report cautions that "standardized tests of student achievement are not designed to assess the sorts of higher order critical thinking skills that teachers following the board's content standards would be encouraged to focus on." National Board standards are focused on engaging students as active learners and adjusting lesson plans to meet students' needs and diverse backgrounds. "This approach to teaching may be very effective and yet not be reflected as higher scores on tests designed to measure basic math and reading skills." The committee found that the board's assessments are effective in identifying teachers who

## Exhibit 2: Tennessee Local District Participation, National Board Certified Teachers

Districts with Most NBCTs	Total NBCTs *Dec. 2010	NBCTs as % of District's Teachers	Annual Salary Bonus Offered	Fee Support Offered
Memphis City	197	2.8%	\$6,000–10,000	\$500+
Williamson County	47	2.3%	\$2,500	n/a
Davidson/Metro Nashville	44	0.9%	\$4,000	~ \$750 (c)
Johnson City	25	4.9%	\$2,000 (a)	n/a
Franklin Special	19	5.9%	\$4,000	~ \$800 (c)+
Hamilton County	18	0.6%	\$4,000	+
Putnam County	10	1.6%	\$2,500	n/a
Kingsport City	8	1.8%	n/a	\$850+
Knox County	8	0.2%	n/a	n/a
Hamblen County	7	1.1%	\$796	n/a
Rutherford County	7	0.3%	(b)	n/a
Shelby County	7	0.2%	\$2,000	n/a

### NUMBER OF NBCTs

**School districts with 1–5 NBCTs listed:** City/Special: Athens, Bristol, Cleveland, Etowah, Lebanon, Lenoir City, Lexington, Maryville, Oak Ridge, Tullahoma. County: Blount, Bradley, Cheatham, Cocke, Dickson, Dyer, Hancock, Hardin, Hawkins, Loudon, Marshall, Morgan, Rhea, Roane, Robertson, Sequatchie, Sevier, Sullivan, Sumner, Warren, Washington, and White.

\* **NOTE:** The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards reports NBCTs by their employing district at the time of their certification. Teachers certified in one district but who now teach in another district or who have left teaching are still counted in their original certification district. So, for example, in Greeneville City and Wilson County, no NBCTs are reported on the NBPTS directory, although both districts now employ certified teachers. In districts where data was verified, the directory numbers were generally not significantly different from actual NBCTs employed. Eighteen teachers with active certifications listed in the NBPTS directory for Tennessee have no school district identified.

### INCENTIVES

**Other districts offering National Board incentives:** City/Special: Athens, Elizabethton, Fayetteville, Greeneville, Lebanon, Lenoir City, Lexington, Manchester, Oak Ridge, and Rogersville.

County: Dyer, Fayette, Hawkins, Lincoln, McMinn, McNairy, Overton, Roane, Robertson, Sequatchie, Smith, Sullivan, Trousdale, Warren, and Wilson.

(a) Johnson City also offers an initial one-time bonus of \$500.

(b) Rutherford County offers a one-time bonus of \$4,000.

(c) Usual size of fee support. Policy to pay up to \$2,000 toward fee, less state subsidy.

+ Districts that provide some fee support for retakes, renewals, and/or Take One.

Sources: NBPTS website, [http://www.nbpts.org/resources/nbct\\_directory](http://www.nbpts.org/resources/nbct_directory), accessed March 2011, Tennessee Department of Education 2010 Annual Statistical Report, and phone/e-mail correspondence with various local districts.

demonstrate accomplished teaching practice. The report called for more research to be conducted beyond Florida and North Carolina and to be focused on student outcomes beyond standardized test scores.<sup>13</sup>

### **Certification and the Increased Focus on Student Test Scores**

The No Child Left Behind standards of adequate yearly progress, coupled with the Race to the Top's focus on student achievement data to evaluate educators, have increased attention on the use of standardized tests to measure student learning and to establish accountability systems. In response to these trends, the National Board formed a task force in late 2009 to investigate how student learning and achievement are used in the National Board's certification process and to make recommendations for improvement. The task force released its report, *Student Learning, Student Achievement: How Do Teachers Measure Up?*, in March 2011.

Echoing the earlier National Research Council report, the task force noted that the National Board has always been guided by the premise that the hallmark of accomplished teaching is student learning.<sup>14</sup> The 1986 Carnegie Task Force report that led to the creation of the National Board assumed a transformed, professionalized teaching profession would lead naturally to improved student learning but did not envision improved learning only in terms of higher test scores. "While concrete measures of accountability [are] not inherently at odds with the . . . original goal . . . [they do provide a] different conception of what constitutes excellent teaching."<sup>15</sup> Twenty years ago, the "applied assessment, technology, data systems, and test-based accountability models" did not exist and efforts to identify accomplished teachers had to rely almost entirely on expert evaluations of teaching practice. "Today, advances have made it increasingly possible to incorporate direct and systematic evidence about student learning into measurements of teacher quality."<sup>16</sup>

The 2009 National Board's report highlighted a key issue: the distinction between student learning (growth over time) and student achievement (status at one point in time) related to subject matter knowledge,

understanding, and skills. The task force strongly urged that any use of student data focus on growth, but cautioned that the popular "value-added" approach had limitations and urged that it be used in conjunction with examinations of teaching practice.

The National Board report outlines essential criteria to consider in using large-scale standardized tests for teacher evaluation.<sup>17</sup> The task force supports the use of large-scale standardized test results as one measure in the National Board's certification process if such tests meet the criteria, and it recommends the National Board explore adding standardized test results as a new component to certification. For education policymakers and practitioners generally, the task force recommended several principles for selecting or developing student assessments that are used to evaluate teacher practice and for developing evaluations of teachers based on student assessments. In addition to exploring the addition of standardized test results to certification requirements, the report also recommended that the National Board:

- increase its focus on how student learning is specifically evaluated within each of the National Board certificate areas,
- promote teacher skills in designing classroom assessments, interpreting external assessments, and using test results as a central indication of accomplished teaching, and
- monitor and conduct research related to teachers' impact on student learning.

### **Certification's Impact on Teachers' Skills and Employment.**

Board-certified teachers report that attempting certification provides a professional development experience for them and has positive influences on their teaching practices.<sup>18</sup> The National Research Council's evaluation committee reviewed two studies that suggest participation in the certification process improves their teaching practice, regardless of whether teachers are successful in obtaining certification. However, the committee believed that these studies alone did not provide sufficient evidence for a conclusive finding.<sup>19</sup>

The NRC report did find that board-certified teachers may be more likely to stay in teaching than those who do not earn certification, but there was not enough data to generalize to states outside those in the studies.<sup>20</sup> Also not clear is whether board-certified teachers stay in teaching longer because they received certification or whether they pursued certification because they were already more likely to remain.

In most states, including Tennessee, National Board certification fulfills the “highly qualified” teacher standard for No Child Left Behind. Also, the certification serves as adequate proof for licensure for teachers moving to many states. The American Council on Education has stipulated that teachers completing the board’s certification process can qualify for three graduate school credit hours, and those who achieve certification qualify for an additional six hours of graduate credit.

### **Certification’s Impact on High Needs Schools**

Two early studies that looked at the correlation between board-certified teachers and student test gains found greater positive effects for low-income and minority students who were taught by NBCTs. These studies are consistent with earlier research that teacher quality has a larger impact on poor students than on higher-income students. Historically, teachers from disadvantaged schools have been less likely to seek National Board certification and poor and minority students have been less likely to have board-certified teachers.<sup>21</sup>

The National Board has taken steps to improve the rates of NBCTs serving in high-need schools through its Targeted High Need Initiative (THNI) program. Through this program, National Board staff work with state and local education agencies, colleges, and other organizations to recruit and support teachers in high-need schools interested in pursuing certification.

THNI program funds, coordinated through the Tennessee Education Association (TEA), have been used in a number of Tennessee counties since 2006–07 in two main ways: to provide training for certification mentors (who, in turn, provide support for certification candidates) and to subsidize application fees for teachers to participate in the National Board’s “Take

One” program, which allows teachers to sample one component of the certification process. Over the past five years, TEA has organized programs with local districts in Memphis City, Shelby, Fayette, Tipton, Haywood, Hamilton, Bradley, Cleveland City, Athens City, and in 2010–11, 10 districts in the Upper Cumberland region: Clay, DeKalb, Jackson, Macon, Overton, Pickett, Putnam, Smith, Sumner, and Trousdale.<sup>22</sup> Through National Board funds, and TEA staffing and funding, teachers in these counties can participate in “Take One” at a 75 percent discount, receive guidance from trained, certified mentors, and network with other participating teachers. The local districts provide various supports such as granting professional development time, offering facilities, and helping teachers pay the other 25 percent of the application fees. According to TEA’s National Board coordinator, the THNI program in Tennessee helps districts that may have few or no board-certified teachers provide their teachers a chance to experience part of the certification process.<sup>23</sup>

Several states use board-certified teachers as part of their strategy to turn around low-performing schools by offering various financial incentives for teachers at those schools to pursue certification or to already-certified teachers to teach there. States such as Washington, Maryland, and New York use state-funded salary bonuses for certified teachers in low-performing schools. Other states, like Florida, use federally funded grants to subsidize certification application fees for teachers in high-need schools. (See also “Are There Incentives for Certification?”.) Individual districts in various states pursue their own strategies to put more board-certified teachers in struggling schools. The National Board reports that approximately 46 percent of all NBCTs teach in high-need schools (where at least 40 percent of students qualify for free or reduced price lunch) and in recent years, 50 percent of new NBCTs teach in these schools.<sup>24</sup>

### **Are there incentives for certification?**

#### **Nationally**

Approximately 60 percent of states provide some form of financial support (e.g., salary incentives, application fee assistance) for teachers who pursue and/or achieve National Board certification.<sup>25</sup> As discussed earlier, teacher participation rates vary greatly among states

and are strongly linked to financial incentives offered. The four states that have consistently offered financial incentives for certification – Florida, Mississippi, and North and South Carolina – have seen from 10 percent to 21 percent of eligible teachers attempt certification. In the seven states that have not offered incentives for at least the past few years – Alaska, Arizona, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Tennessee, Texas, and Utah – participation ranges from 0.2 percent to 1.5 percent of eligible teachers.<sup>26</sup> Some states that have had to scale back or discontinue their incentives, such as Florida and Georgia, have seen sharp drops in participation.<sup>27</sup>

A federal subsidy program is available to the states to offset one-half of the certification fees. Applicants can receive a subsidy only once, but beyond that, the states set their own eligibility requirements. The National Board reports that the majority of funds it receives from the U.S. Department of Education are allocated to the states for these subsidies of certification fees. In 2010, 8,200 teachers nationwide received subsidies.<sup>28</sup>

### **Regionally**

In a review of 14 southern states, Tennessee and Texas had the smallest percentage of teachers with National Board certification. Of the 10 southern states with salary incentives, most provide a set bonus amount to be paid annually for the life of the 10-year certificate, ranging from \$2,000 (Kentucky) to \$6,000 (Mississippi). (See Exhibit 3.) Some states continue the bonus if teachers renew their certification; others do not. North Carolina sets a percentage supplement (12 percent) to be paid over the state base salary, and Virginia provides an initial \$5,000 plus a \$2,500 annual bonus. While state financial incentives had generally remained stable over most of the past 10 years, recent budget constraints have caused several states to reduce, eliminate, or discontinue funding for certification incentives. South Carolina has reduced its bonus and capped participation; Missouri discontinued incentives; Georgia has placed increasing restrictions on eligibility for salary supplements and not funded them for 2010–12; Florida's salary supplement, set at 10 percent based on budget availability, was only funded at about eight percent in 2010–11 and at less than four percent for 2011–12.

In addition to salary incentives, some states in the region provide various types of financial assistance (e.g., loans, grants) to help pay application fees. Five states offer assistance in addition to the federal subsidies. For example, Mississippi will reimburse the \$2,500 application fee for public school teachers who complete the process. Some states (Kentucky and West Virginia) pay for candidates' preparation fees, while other states (Arkansas and North Carolina) offer other supports, such as three days of release time to prepare for certification assessments.

### **Tennessee**

Tennessee currently awards federal application fee subsidies on a first-come, first-served basis for first-time candidates teaching in public schools. The subsidies are for half the application fee, or \$1,250. The National Board has allocated subsidies for 103 candidates from Tennessee for the 2011–12 certification year; allocations are based on the number of subsidies the state awarded in the previous year.<sup>29</sup> If demand increases, Tennessee can request additional funds. According to the federal subsidy administrator for Tennessee, the state did not have to turn down anyone seeking a subsidy last year.

Tennessee does not currently provide salary bonuses, although the state did provide state fee support for a brief period of time in the past. A 1998 statute (TCA 49-5-5609) directs the Commissioner of Education to provide reimbursement to no more than 25 teachers to cover certification fees. The statutory language has been understood to mean 25 teachers total, rather than 25 per year. Although the state Department of Education has already covered the fees for the 25 applicants under this law, the department has continued to allot \$50,000 annually from its professional development funding to provide other support items for National Board candidates, such as mentoring, professional development, and substitute teachers for candidates. Currently, the department spends these funds primarily on mentoring assistance.<sup>30</sup> The National Board trains teachers to serve as mentors through its candidate support program. The department helps match mentors with candidates, often candidates who are retaking the assessments. Funds are used to pay mentors \$25 per hour for a maximum of 30 hours. Since Tennessee has

been able to meet the demand for application fee assistance with the federal subsidy program, the department considers the state monies best used for mentoring support.

#### Local districts

Available information indicates that at least 36 Tennessee school districts offer at least one type of incentive; several offer more than one. (See Exhibit 2.) Annual salary bonuses are the most common incentives, ranging from \$796 (Hamblen County) to \$10,000 (Memphis City Schools' top range). Some

**Exhibit 3: Southern State Financial Incentives for Board Certified Teachers (State-funded incentives only)**

	Salary Bonus Offered	Reduced or Limited Since 2009	Fee Support Offered	Reduced or Limited Since 2009
<b>Alabama</b>	\$4,450 (a)	x	Discontinued (f)	x
<b>Arkansas</b>	\$5,000		\$2,500 for first time	
<b>Florida</b>	10% - pro-rated based on funding (b)	x	None	
<b>Georgia</b>	Discontinued (c)	x	Discontinued (g)	x
<b>Kentucky</b>	\$2,000		75%	
<b>Louisiana</b>	\$5,000		Discontinued (h)	x
<b>Mississippi</b>	\$6,000		\$2,500 upon completion Interest-free loans available	
<b>Missouri</b>	Discontinued (d)	x	Discontinued (i)	x
<b>North Carolina</b>	12%		\$2500 as special loan for eligible teachers	
<b>South Carolina</b>	\$5000 capped at 900 teachers annually (e)	x	Discontinued (j)	x
<b>Tennessee</b>	None		None	
<b>Texas</b>	None		None	
<b>Virginia</b>	Initial \$5,000 with \$2,500 annually		None	
<b>West Virginia</b>	\$3,500		50% for applicants; 100% for completion annual cap of 200	x

Notes: (a) Reduced from \$5,000 in FY 2011

(b) Bonus is pro-rated based on available funding. FY 2010 = 8.14% FY 2011 = 3.91% (approximately \$1900 average)

(c) Teachers certified before 2006 received a 10% bonus. Teachers certified by 2009 received a 10% bonus for teaching in high-needs schools. Bonuses not funded in FY 2011 or 2012.

(d) Previously \$5,000 bonus for teachers in Career Ladder districts.

(e) Cut from \$7500 as of 7/1/10. Bonus is currently provisional legislation.

(f) Prior to fiscal year 2011, state reimbursed the full fee if applicant passed state selection process.

(g) Fee support of up to \$2000 upon certification is still on the books, but not funded since 2009.

(h) (i) Previously \$750

(j) Previously \$2500 loan forgivable loan ; 100% upon certification in high-needs schools.

Note: Some fee incentives are only available for first-time applicants and some salary incentives are only applicable for the first 10-year certification (not renewals). Other qualifications may apply such as bonuses only paid if teachers continue classroom duties and incentives only available to public school teachers. Fee incentives are most commonly in the form of reimbursements. Many incentives are only offered as budget allocations allow. Restricted funding is noted where information was available.

Sources: NBPTS State Profile pages, state web pages, and e-mail correspondence from individual states; Southern Regional Education Board, *Incentives in SREB States for Teachers to Earn Certification from NBPTS*, 2009.

districts offer one-time bonuses upon certification. At least 13 districts provide support for application fees, from \$500 to full reimbursement, and some assist with retake or renewal fees and/or fees for the Take One program. Several districts offer other support, most commonly release time or professional leave days for preparation.

### **Certification Compared to Master's Degrees**

Both National Board certification and master's degrees indicate that teachers' skills and knowledge have been proven to an independent party (the National Board or a university graduate program). Both involve investment of public and private dollars, such as teachers' application fees/tuition, the public and private funds subsidizing the National Board/university programs, and teachers' preparation/class/study time. Salary bonuses at the local or state level may be paid to teachers with these credentials to retain and reward them, as well as to encourage others to pursue higher skill levels in the field.

While the NRC study found that board-certified teachers produce gains in student achievement that are slightly larger than those of non-certified colleagues, studies of teachers with master's degrees show no similar effect on student achievement. The National Council on Teacher Quality in its 2010 report, *Restructuring Teacher Pay to Reward Excellence*, found no statistically significant correlation between teachers holding advanced degrees and academic achievement of their students, as measured by standardized test scores in math, science, and reading.<sup>31</sup> These findings were based on the council's commissioned analysis of 102 teacher education studies conducted since 1993. Some of the studies reviewed actually found a significant *negative* impact of teachers' degree status and student achievement.

It is much more common for teachers to have master's degrees (43 percent nationally)<sup>32</sup> than National Board certification (three percent). Seventeen states have salary schedules that require districts to pay more to teachers with advanced degrees; Tennessee is one of those, along with most of the other southern states.<sup>33</sup> The national average salary bonus for a master's degree used in the NRC's cost effectiveness analysis was \$7,000.<sup>34</sup> In Tennessee it is significantly lower, approximately \$3,700–4,000.<sup>35</sup>

State bonuses for board-certified teachers have on average been smaller than those for master's degrees but, until recently, more common nationally. From the most recent National Board data, 26 states offered an annual salary bonus for board certification, but more than one-fourth of the states made those bonuses contingent on available funding or had other restrictions on their use. Five southern states recently limited or eliminated their board-certification bonuses. The median bonus in 2008 for participating states was \$2,100. Tennessee does not offer a state bonus for certification but among local districts that offer bonuses, the median is \$2,500.

## **New Certification for Principals and Teacher Leaders**

The National Board is currently developing a new certification process for educational leaders, which it envisions to be an umbrella program for certification of principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders. The purpose of this initiative is to create a reliable process to develop, recognize, and retain top school-based leaders. The nine core propositions for accomplished educational leaders, developed and adopted by NBPTS in 2009, are:

### **SKILLS**

1. Accomplished educational leaders continuously cultivate their understanding of leadership and the change process to meet high levels of performance. (Leadership)
2. Accomplished educational leaders have a clear vision and inspire and engage stakeholders in developing and realizing the mission. (Vision)
3. Accomplished educational leaders manage and leverage systems and processes to achieve desired results. (Management)

### **APPLICATIONS**

4. Accomplished educational leaders act with a sense of urgency to foster a cohesive culture of learning. (Culture)
5. Accomplished educational leaders are committed to student and adult learners and to their development. (Learners and Learning)
6. Accomplished educational leaders drive, facilitate and monitor the teaching and learning process. (Instruction)

### **DISPOSITIONS**

7. Accomplished educational leaders model professional, ethical behavior and expect it from others. (Ethics)
8. Accomplished educational leaders ensure equitable learning opportunities and high expectations for all. (Equity)
9. Accomplished educational leaders advocate on behalf of their schools, communities and profession. (Advocacy)

From the core propositions the National Board is developing standards, assessments, and a scoring system. Phase one of the new program is the principal certification and, as of June 2011, field tests had been completed and pilot testing had begun. The principal certification is tentatively expected to begin accepting its first principal applications in the fall of 2012.<sup>36</sup>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 1986.

<sup>2</sup> National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. *55,000 Reasons to Believe: The Impact of National Board Certification on Teaching Quality in America*, 2007, pp.7-8, <http://www.nbpts.org> (accessed Feb. 15, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> The National Board's corporate donors currently include Amgen, Boeing, Citgo, Coca-Cola Foundation, Georgia-Pacific, GlaxoSmithKline, Chase, Liberty Mutual, Northrop Grumman, Oracle, State Farm Companies Foundation, Stuart Foundation, UPS, as well as Heinz Endowments, National Policy Board for Educational Administration, Pfizer, Pi Lambda Theta, Pitney Bowes, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, Grable Foundation, and Pittsburgh Foundation.

<sup>4</sup> Annual financial data for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards was not readily available, but grant documents indicate the cumulative percentage of federal funds supporting cumulative totals of NBPTS budgets. Documents from successive years indicate that the ratio of federal funding to total budget has been declining steadily. However, federal allocations to NBPTS actually grew in years that its percentage of the NBPTS budget was declining. In 2001, federal funds allocated to NBPTS since 1991 represented 55 percent of NBPTS's last 11 years' budgets. By 2009, federal funds allocated since 1991 represented only 30 percent of NBPTS last 19 years' budgets.

<sup>5</sup> Joyce Loveless, Executive Director for Program Access and Equity, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, telephone interview, June 6, 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Sara Heyburn, Education Policy Advisor, Department of Education, e-mail, June 24, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Calculated percentage based on data from National Research Council, *Assessing Accomplished Teaching: Advanced-Level Certification Programs*, Committee on Evaluation of Teacher Certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, Milton D. Hakel, Judith Anderson Koenig, and Stuart W. Elliott, editors, Board on Testing and Assessment, Center for Education, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, The National Academies Press, 2008, p.5, <http://www.nap.edu/> (accessed March 17, 2011).

<sup>8</sup> The National Research Council is the research arm of the National Academies, a private, nonprofit institution which advises the nation on scientific and technical matters. The National Academies comprises four organizations: the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, the Institute of Medicine, and the National Research Council.

<sup>9</sup> National Research Council, *Assessing Accomplished Teaching: Advanced-Level Certification Programs*, Committee on Evaluation of Teacher Certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, Milton D. Hakel, Judith Anderson Koenig, and Stuart W. Elliott, editors, Board on Testing and Assessment, Center for Education,

Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, The National Academies Press, 2008, <http://www.nap.edu/> (accessed March 17, 2011).

<sup>10</sup> Dan Goldhaber and Emily Anthony, *Can Teacher Quality be Effectively Assessed?*, The Urban Institute, 2004; Linda Cavalluzzo, *Is National Board Certification an Effective Signal of Teacher Quality?*, CNA Corporation, Nov. 2004, as cited in National Conference of State Legislatures, "National Board Certification for Teachers: Does it Work?," <http://www.ncsl.org/> (accessed April 1, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> W.L. Sanders, J.J. Ashton, and S.P. Wright, *Comparison of the Effectiveness of NBPTS Certified Teachers with Other Teachers on the Rates of Student Academic Progress*, SAS Institute, 2005; Doug Harris and Tim Sass, *The Effects of NBPTS-Certified Teachers on Student Achievement*, National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Educational Research Working Papers, 2007, as cited in National Conference of State Legislatures, "National Board Certification for Teachers: Does it Work?," <http://www.ncsl.org/> (accessed April 1, 2011); J.E. Stone, *The Value-Added Achievement Gains of NBPTS-Certified Teachers in Tennessee: A Brief Report*, Education Consumers Foundation, 2002, <http://www.education-consumers.org/> (accessed March 11, 2011).

<sup>12</sup> National Research Council, *Assessing Accomplished Teaching: Advanced-Level Certification Programs*, Committee on Evaluation of Teacher Certification by the National

Board for Professional Teaching Standards, Milton D. Hakel, Judith Anderson Koenig, and Stuart W. Elliott, editors, Board on Testing and Assessment, Center for Education, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, The National Academies Press, 2008, p. 253, <http://www.nap.edu/> (accessed March 17, 2011).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Student Learning, Student Achievement Task Force, *Student Learning, Student Achievement: How Do Teachers Measure Up?*, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, March 2011, p. 8, <http://www.nbpts.org/> (accessed March 7, 2011).

<sup>15</sup> National Research Council, *Assessing Accomplished Teaching: Advanced-Level Certification Programs*, Committee on Evaluation of Teacher Certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, Milton D. Hakel, Judith Anderson Koenig, and Stuart W. Elliott, editors, Board on Testing and Assessment, Center for Education, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, The National Academies Press, 2008, p.260, <http://www.nap.edu/> (accessed March 17, 2011).

<sup>16</sup> Student Learning, Student Achievement Task Force, *Student Learning, Student Achievement: How Do Teachers Measure Up?*, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, March 2011, p. 8, <http://www.nbpts.org/> (accessed March 7, 2011).

<sup>17</sup> Essential criteria include close alignment between assessments and curriculum standards, validity of tests for assessing special populations, data systems that track students and link teachers to students, assessment scoring and administration factors, and controlling for outside-of-the-classroom factors on student achievement.

<sup>18</sup> David Lustick and Gary Sykes, *National Board Certification as Professional Development: What are Teachers Learning?*, Education Policy Analysis Archives, Vol.14, No.5, March 31, 2006, pp. 130-157, <http://epaa.asu.edu/> (accessed March 22, 2011); Committee on Evaluation of Teacher Certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards interviews, described in National Research Council, *Assessing Accomplished Teaching: Advanced-Level Certification Programs*, Committee on Evaluation of Teacher Certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, Milton D. Hakel, Judith Anderson Koenig, and Stuart W. Elliott, editors, Board on Testing and Assessment, Center for Education, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, The National Academies Press, 2008, pp. 192-194, <http://www.nap.edu/> (accessed March 17, 2011).

<sup>19</sup> National Research Council, *Assessing Accomplished Teaching: Advanced-Level Certification Programs*, Committee on Evaluation of Teacher Certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, Milton D. Hakel, Judith Anderson Koenig, and Stuart W. Elliott, editors, Board on Testing and Assessment, Center for Education, Division of Behavioral and Social

Sciences and Education, The National Academies Press, 2008, pp. 192, 194, 195, <http://www.nap.edu/> (accessed March 17, 2011), citing David Lustick and Gary Sykes, *National Board Certification as Professional Development: What are Teachers Learning?*, Education Policy Analysis Archives, Vol.14, No.5, 2006, and L. Darling-Hammond and J.M. Atkin, *Influences of National Board Certification on Teachers' Classroom Assessment Practices*, unpublished paper, Stanford University, 2007.

<sup>20</sup> National Research Council, *Assessing Accomplished Teaching: Advanced-Level Certification Programs*, Committee on Evaluation of Teacher Certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, Milton D. Hakel, Judith Anderson Koenig, and Stuart W. Elliott, editors, Board on Testing and Assessment, Center for Education, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, The National Academies Press, 2008, pp. 202, 204-205, 208, 256, <http://www.nap.edu/> (accessed March 17, 2011), citing G. Sykes, et.al., *National Board Certified Teachers as an Organizational Resource*, University of Michigan, 2006, and D. Goldhaber and M. Hansen, *National Board certification and teacher career paths: Does NBPTS certification influence how long teachers remain in the profession and where they teach?*, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2007.

<sup>21</sup> National Research Council, *Assessing Accomplished Teaching: Advanced-Level Certification Programs*, Committee on Evaluation of Teacher Certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching

Standards, Milton D. Hakel, Judith Anderson Koenig, and Stuart W. Elliott, editors, Board on Testing and Assessment, Center for Education, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, The National Academies Press, 2008, pp. 130, 251, <http://www.nap.edu/> (accessed March 17, 2011); Daniel C. Humphrey, Julia E. Koppich, and Heather J. Hough, *Sharing the Wealth: National Board Certified Teachers and the Schools that Need them Most*, SRI International, November 2004, as cited in National Conference of State Legislatures, *National Board Certification for Teachers: Does it Work?*, <http://www.ncsl.org/> (accessed April 1, 2011).

<sup>22</sup> Susan Dalton, Tennessee Education Association, telephone interview, April 8, 2011.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, “What the Research Says,” <http://www.nbpts.org/> (accessed Feb. 15, 2011).

<sup>25</sup> National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, “State Profiles,” <http://www.nbpts.org/> (accessed multiple dates, Feb. – May 2011).

<sup>26</sup> National Research Council, *Assessing Accomplished Teaching: Advanced-Level Certification Programs*, Committee on Evaluation of Teacher Certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, Milton D. Hakel, Judith Anderson Koenig, and Stuart W. Elliott, editors, Board on Testing and Assessment, Center for Education, Division of Behavioral and Social

Sciences and Education, The National Academies Press, 2008, p. 251, <http://www.nap.edu/> (accessed March 17, 2011).

<sup>27</sup> Dave Weber, “Florida’s budget cuts block path for teachers seeking national certification,” *Orlando Sentinel.com*, Dec. 26, 2008, <http://www.nctq.org/> (accessed March 14, 2011); Ginny Elliot, Program Director for Teacher Recognition, Georgia Professional Standards Commission, e-mail, April 4, 2011.

<sup>28</sup> National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, “NBPTS Allocates Federal Subsidy Funds to States,” March 8, 2011, <http://www.nbpts.org/> (accessed March 30, 2011).

<sup>29</sup> Dr. Johnny Crow, National Board Candidate Subsidy Administrator, Tennessee Department of Education, telephone interview, March 16, 2011.

<sup>30</sup> John Sharp, Budget Director, Tennessee Department of Education, telephone interview, April 4, 2011 and Dr. Johnny Crow, National Board Candidate Subsidy Administrator, Tennessee Department of Education, telephone interview, March 16, 2011.

<sup>31</sup> National Council on Teacher Quality, *Restructuring Teacher Pay to Reward Excellence*, Dec. 2010, p.3, <http://www.nctq.org/> (accessed March 28, 2011).

<sup>32</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education 2010, Indicator 27 – Characteristics of Full-Time Teachers*, Institute of Education Science, U.S. Department of Education, 2010, pp. 236-237, <http://nces.ed.gov/> (accessed April 14, 2011).

<sup>33</sup> National Council on Teacher Quality, *Restructuring Teacher Pay to Reward Excellence*, Dec. 2010, pp.4-5, <http://www.nctq.org/> (accessed March 28, 2011).

<sup>34</sup> National Research Council, *Assessing Accomplished Teaching: Advanced-Level Certification Programs*, Committee on Evaluation of Teacher Certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, Milton D. Hakel, Judith Anderson Koenig, and Stuart W. Elliott, editors, Board on Testing and Assessment, Center for Education, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, The National Academies Press, 2008, p. 241, <http://www.nap.edu/> (accessed March 17, 2011).

<sup>35</sup> Estimate based on the Tennessee Board of Education minimum salary schedule for teachers with master’s degrees at five, 10, and 20 years of teaching experience plus salary schedules of seven selected districts representing 41 percent of Tennessee teachers. <http://www.tn.gov/sbe/>.

<sup>36</sup> Joyce Loveless, Executive Director for Program Access and Equity, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, telephone interview, June 6, 2011.

## Appendix A: Certificates Currently Available

---

### **Art**

Early and Middle Childhood  
Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood

### **Career and Technical Education**

Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood

### **English as a New Language**

Early and Middle Childhood  
Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood

### **English Language Arts**

Early Adolescence  
Adolescence and Young Adulthood

### **Exceptional Needs Specialist**

Early Childhood through Young Adulthood

### **Generalist**

Early Childhood  
Middle Childhood

### **Health**

Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood

### **Library Media**

Early Childhood through Young Adulthood

### **Literacy: Reading – Language Arts**

Early and Middle Childhood

### **Mathematics**

Early Adolescence  
Adolescence and Young Adulthood

### **Music**

Early and Middle Childhood  
Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood

### **Physical Education**

Early and Middle Childhood  
Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood

### **School Counseling**

Early Childhood through Young Adulthood

### **Science**

Early Adolescence  
Adolescence and Young Adulthood

### **Social Studies – History**

Early Adolescence  
Adolescence and Young Adulthood

### **World Languages Other than English**

Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood

### **Age Categories**

Early Childhood (Ages 3-8)  
Early & Middle Childhood (Ages 3-12)  
Early Childhood through Young Adulthood (Ages 3-18+)  
Middle Childhood (Ages 7-12)  
Early Adolescence (Ages 11-15)  
Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood (Ages 11-18+)  
Adolescence and Young Adulthood (Ages 14-18+)



OFFICES OF RESEARCH AND EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY  
Phillip Doss, Director  
Suite 1700, James K. Polk Building ▪ 505 Deaderick Street  
Nashville, Tennessee 37243 ▪ (615) 401-7911  
[www.tn.gov/comptroller/orea](http://www.tn.gov/comptroller/orea)

